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June 5

Prisoner-Tractor Exchange
EXTENSION OF REMARKS
OF

HON. BRUCE ALGER

OF TEXAS
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, June 1, 1961

Mr. ALGER. Mr. Speaker, under leave to extend my remarks in the RECORD, I include the following:

WASHINGTON REPORT BY CONGRESSMAN BRUCE ALGER, FIFTH DISTRICT, TEXAS

JUNE 3, 1961.

The prisoner-tractor exchange demanded by Castro is almost unbelievable and should be carefully studied and understood by every American—1,214 Cubans and 500 tractors (\$30,000 each for heavy construction) are involved. Legally and morally many other matters are involved. The President planned the U.S. end by setting up the private committee of Eleanor Roosevelt, Walter Reuther, and Milton Eisenhower. These factors must be considered as pointed out by the President: (1) He acted as a private citizen; (2) this transaction (a) will not violate the law, the Logan Act, (b) is tax deductible, (c) the existing partial embargo preventing tractor shipment to Cuba can be changed, and (d) this is a humanitarian effort to save the lives of several hundred men.

Let's look at the facts: (1) The President, as head of our Government, cannot deal as a private citizen in foreign and military policy, even if he can in any other field (which is questionable). (2) He misinterprets the law, the Logan Act, when he says "I am advised that the Logan Act is not involved inasmuch as it covers only negotiations 'in relation to any disputes or controversies with the United States or to defeat the measures of the United States.'" As I see it, the facts of this deal clearly establish violation of the Logan Act. This deal does involve the defeat of measures of the United States. We are in controversy with Communist Castro. Finally, clearly private citizens cannot engage in foreign policy replacing the Government. (3) Contributions cannot be tax deductible as charity or in rehabilitation and assistance of needy refugees. Cuban prisoners do not fit this picture at all. Blackmail is not charity nor vice versa. (4) An export license to ship tractors as a humanitarian effort further fails in logic when it is realized that the equipment is quite possibly to build military bases, later to kill those who endeavor to free Cuba from communism (as the President has promised we will do). (5) This is not humanitarian, when the price of saving these prisoners is (1) blackmail, (2) aids and gives comfort to the enemy in his military buildup, (3) will result in later deaths as the fortifications are strengthened, (4) sets the precedent for later ransom situations when American citizens as tourists, as military or civilian representatives, or in whatever capacity, can be seized and held anywhere outside the continental limits.

For my part, as a Representative, I swear to uphold the Constitution and this action clearly violates the letter and spirit of the Constitution. Therefore, I do not so define national unity and purpose as reason for my silence and refusal to criticize. On the contrary, it is my hope that citizens throughout this great land will rise up and demand a different and clear policy that repudiates this blackmail effort. In this case, the people must lead the Executive (as has occurred many times when Congress overrode a Presidential veto, the voice of the people) to the right course of action. Patriotism demands that we all protest and demand an end to faulty leadership and poor judgment.

John and Lou Tower took Washington by storm. The airport reception, the private reception, the heartfelt eulogies over this Texas election on the floor of the House and Senate have provided a fresh breath of air in this staid and jaded political center. John and Lou were never better than when greeting their new found friends. Poised, happy and sincere, they accepted the plaudits with modesty. I am more convinced than ever that we will now see unfold before us one of the most outstanding political careers of our times. JOHN TOWER has the ability, the understanding and the determination to make an outstanding Legislator, a Senator of whom Texas can be proud. There is no question of the good will extended to JOHN by all. He starts his political career with the admiration and respect of friend and foe alike. The entire Nation has taken heart over this election. For my part, I am proud to have been able to participate in JOHN's election and reception to Washington.

President Eisenhower made an outstanding speech at the congressional dinner in which he outlined a role of Government, foreign and domestic, called responsible progress. Besides the ex-President, greatest applause went to Senator GOLDWATER and Tower.

Extension of the Korean wartime excise and corporate taxes passed in the Ways and Means Committee, 22 to 3. I opposed the extension as a protest to the temporary extension of a temporary tax. It is time for broadly based tax reform. We keep talking about doing it but no action. Further, I am getting tired of "picking up the tab" for the big spenders. It's time we cut down the Government's spending money. This will not succeed (my opposition) unless the people demand less Federal spending and a balanced budget. After all, there are no constitutional limits on Federal borrowing. Here, too, is an area where Government needs to be curtailed.

Our gold supply is down to \$17.4 billion of which \$11.2 billion supports our currency. That leaves \$6.2 billion and President Kennedy has asked that we give away \$4½ billion in foreign aid. Looks like our solvency and sound money won't last long at our current rate of spending. President Kennedy's spending proposals are already over \$4 billion beyond his January estimates. Where are we going?